



# Bangor Land Trust News

Spring 2018

## Penjajawoc Marsh Important Bird Area

by Lucy Quimby

The National Audubon Society has just recognized Bangor's Penjajawoc Marsh as an Important Bird Area (IBA), important to the survival of a number of bird species in Maine. Important Bird Areas are part of an international program run by Birdlife International and its Audubon Society partners. These organizations identify and promote the conservation of areas that are necessary for the survival of bird species and diverse bird habitats worldwide.

We now know that Penjajawoc Marsh plays a significant role in a global conservation effort! The Maine Audubon Society has documented its outstanding wildlife habitat value for years. It is extraordinary because of the number of threatened and endangered species that are found there, the presence of species of special conservation concern, and the number and variety of birds that nest and/or feed in the Marsh and its surrounding upland habitat.

The major threat to the survival of bird species in Maine as elsewhere is loss of habitat—human activity has fragmented, disturbed, or destroyed bird habitat. Global warming will change the nature of the habitat as well. Designation as an Important Bird Area, one of only 78 in Maine and the only one in Penobscot County, highlights the extraordinary value of the Marsh in our midst and helps us all focus on taking care of our global resource. It is good to know that there are specific actions we can take, right here at home, to help ensure the survival of the full array of species on our changing planet.

Bangor Land Trust has been working with landowners around Penjajawoc Marsh since 2001. Portions of the Marsh itself and its upland are now preserved thanks to generous gifts from Columbia

Street Baptist Church (South Penjajawoc Overlook) and Fritz and Caroline Oldenburg (West Penjajawoc Grasslands). We have also received grants from the Land for Maine's Future Board, the North American Wetlands Conservation Council, and the Maine Natural Resource Conservation Program, that have allowed us to pay appraised market value for the land we have preserved. Our agreements with each of these granting agencies prioritize protection of wildlife habitat.

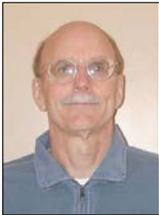
Part of what makes Penjajawoc Marsh such valuable wetland habitat is the presence of other wetlands nearby – Essex Woods wetland to the southwest, and Caribou Bog to the north. Two BLT preserves, North Forest and Walden-Parke, connect the Marsh to Caribou Bog, forming a habitat corridor where animals can travel undisturbed. North Forest came to BLT with habitat protection stipulated by the Army Corps of Engineers. Walden-Parke Preserve, a gift from the Oldenburgs and Shuberts, came with the understanding that BLT would prioritize wildlife habitat protection.

In other news, BLT is again co-sponsoring a series of May bird walks, an opportunity to view the charming avian inhabitants of the Marsh that we have worked so hard to protect. A gentle reminder: when we venture out, it is important to remember that much of the land in and around the Marsh is still in private ownership. It is crucial that we all respect landowner wishes and not go where we are not invited. There are plenty of publicly accessible places for good birding!

It takes a whole community to take care of a treasured resource like ours, now one of a global network of bird habitats that give birds worldwide a better chance to survive changing conditions.



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Dear Friends,

All too often these days the news contains one report after another of damage to our environment – global warming, oil drilling in coastal waters, the disappearance of ice in the Arctic, neonicotinoid pesticides killing bees, failure to protect endangered species – the list goes on. One way to combat depression and awful feelings of helplessness is to do what we can locally to help preserve the diverse array of plants and animals that inhabit our own community here at home.

That is why it is so exciting that Penjajawoc Marsh has won recognition as an important part of a worldwide program to protect essential habitats. As we work to take care of the Marsh, we are not only taking care of our own Wild Back Yard, we are also aiding a global effort.

As a small land trust with an even smaller budget and a highly organized and efficient part-time staff person, we have relied heavily on our membership and our volunteers. For land purchases, we have had the good fortune to receive grants from the State of Maine (Land for Maine's Future), a state wetland mitigation fund (Maine Natural Resources Conservation Program), and the federal North American Wetlands Conservation Act. We have received help from many people and groups that care.

Bangor Land Trust preserves are protected in perpetuity. It is safe to love them, to take a special spot in the woods and fields into your heart without fear that it will be paved over. Nature will always be there. As a land trust, we always ask, how can we help people connect with special places, to love them in a way that nurtures and encourages good stewardship? Natural areas take care of us, they are a place to retreat and explore for exercise, stress reduction, even spiritual renewal. We look to you as to how we can we best inspire all of us to care for them.

Thank you for being a part of this project!

Sincerely,



**Sunday,  
September 9<sup>th</sup>!**

Register online at  
[bangorlandtrust.org](http://bangorlandtrust.org)

Fully-supported routes from 12 to 100 miles. Receive the early-bird discount before July 16th. Can't ride? Volunteer! For more information contact the BLT office at 942-1010 or [info@bangorlandtrust.org](mailto:info@bangorlandtrust.org).

At 12:15 p.m. on Tuesday, March 20th the sun crossed the equator ushering us into spring! It was a sunny day. The northwest wind had diminished. The temperature was around 40. I put on my coat, pulled on my boots, and set off down a forest trail in search of wildflowers. Yes, there is three feet or more of snow cover, and it is snowing as I write, but I did go on a hunt for wildflowers.

The forest snow pack was uneven. It looked like someone had taken a giant ice cream scoop and scooped snow out here and there. Most of the bowls had a layer of snow at the bottom, but some revealed a dark shiny brown bottom. Ice was covering the forest floor. In one of these bowls I found what I was looking for, skunk cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*). Like the crocus next to your home, the skunk cabbage are among the earliest bloomers. They are adapted to freezing and thawing conditions, so their cells do not burst and harm the plant. Being among the earliest bloomers, skunk cabbage have developed strategies to attract the early insects to pollinate their flowers, thus assuring the next generation of skunk cabbage.

*Symplocarpus foetidus* are vascular plants within the Araceae family. If you are familiar with jack-in-the-pulpits, calla lilies, or peace plants, then you are familiar with the Araceae family's unique shape. Plants within this family have a spadix and generally a spathe. The spadix is an inflorescence or cluster of flowers that is often surrounded by the spathe, or leaf-like bract. The spathe acts like a hoodie surrounding the spadix, keeping the spadix toasty warm at this time of year. Scientific studies have found that within the spathe the temperature can rise up to 70 degrees. The combination of warmth along with a distinctive scent is what attracts the insects. Although not attractive to us, the "skunky" odor resembling decaying flesh is very appealing to these flies. The flies smell the scent and enter the spathe. The insects come in, get warm, and can get food from the multiple flowers that comprise the spadix. When they leave



## Thank you!

- Larry Beauregard for a well-planned and interesting Winter Twigs program in December.
- Sandra Mitchell for a great Saturday morning program on Mammal Tracks & Signs and the follow-up field trip in January.
- Christine Conte for wonderful information on ticks and Lyme disease. We look forward to hearing about your research on the effects timber harvesting may play in the spread of the disease.
- Dana Wilde for the very nice time we were able to spend with you in March. You certainly have a wonderful way of putting words together.
- Returning PtP Committee members for your input and dedication in planning this event.
- BLT board member, Bill Phillips, for the many hours of work on the trails and creating new maps.
- Past Programs Committee member, George Elliott, for your many years of service on the committee. We will miss you at the meetings but know we'll still see you around.

they carry pollen to the next warming, feeding station, aka, the next skunk cabbage.

Because of the balmy interior temperatures, you may get to see an interesting phenomena. The snow or ice can pull away from the warm plant leaving a snowless ring around it. In the photo you will see an iceless ring – pretty neat! Tomorrow after the snow has stopped I'll go out to see if a snowless ring is still evident.

Although *Symplocarpus foetidus* may not be aromatic to our sense of smell, they are incredibly important to the early insects, who are, in turn, incredibly important to the plant – a symbiotic, win-win relationship. Skunk cabbage are a marvelous sign of spring. I encourage you to go on a wildflower walk. Check out the skunk cabbages. They are remarkable.



# BANGOR LAND TRUST

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### BANGOR LAND TRUST'S MISSION:

“Protect for public benefit land and water in the Bangor region that have special ecological, natural, scenic, agricultural, or recreational significance while increasing public understanding of the value of land and water conservation.”



## Upcoming Programs

Month of May (all walks are 7 am to 8:30 am)  
Maine Audubon, Penobscot Valley Chapter

### **Neighborhood Bird Walks**

<http://www.bangorlandtrust.org/calendar-of-events.html>  
various locations near YOU!

Saturday, May 19 at 9 a.m.

### **Vernal Pool Exploration**

Northeast Penjajawoc Preserve  
meet at the kiosk off of the Kittredge Road

Saturday, June 2 at 10 a.m.

### **Lady Slipper Walk**

Walden-Parke Preserve  
meet at the kiosk at the end of Tamarack Trail

Sunday, September 9

### **Pedal the Penobscot 2018**

High Tide Restaurant & Bar  
5 South Main Street, Brewer

For more information or to RSVP call 942-1010 or email [info@bangorlandtrust.org](mailto:info@bangorlandtrust.org)



*Mammal Tracks & Signs program, January 20, 2018*

Have you been thinking about a way to make a difference that will last even after you're gone? You can give an enduring gift of Bangor's wild back yard to future generations by making a bequest to Bangor Land Trust in your will.

For more information call 942-1010 or send a message to [info@bangorlandtrust.org](mailto:info@bangorlandtrust.org).

*"Nature is not a place to visit, it is home."*

*Gary Snyder*